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Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
----------171026Z 036685 /14/43
P 131535Z MAY 77
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AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L GENEVA 3717

EXDIS

C O R R E C T E D FOR MRN (3717 VICE 3707)

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PORG, EAID, UN (VIET-NAM)
SUBJECT: AID TO VIET-NAM - VICTOR UMBRICHT'S CALL AT MISSION

REF: GENEVA 1806

1. UMBRICHT CALLED ON CHARGE MAY 12 TO REPORT HIS RECENT CONVERSATIONS WITH AMBASSADOR NGUYEN PHAN LUU, WHO IS CURRENTLY HEADING VIETNAMESE DELEGATION TO THE HUMANITARIAN LAW CONFERENCE IN GENEVA.

2. LUU MADE FOLLOWING POINTS TO UMBRICHT:

(A) ALTHTHOUGH VIETNAMESE HAVE PROVIDED U.S. WITH ALL INFORMATION ON MIA'S IN THEIR POSSESSION THEY ARE PREPARED TO UNDERTAKE ADDITIONAL EFFORTS.

(B) VIETNAMESE NOW REALIZE THAT PROSPECTS FOR EARLY U.S. ACTION TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE ON BILATERAL BASIS ARE POOR BUT WONDER WHETHER USG MIGHT FIND IT EASIER TO PROVIDE AID THROUGH MULTILATERAL CHANNELS
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IN THE NOT TOO DISTANT FUTURE.

(C) VIET-NAM DESIRES, IN ANY EVENT, TO HAVE A "UN UMBRELLA" FOR INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE SO AS TO HAVE A GREATER "BALANCE" WITH RESPECT TO SOURCES OF AID.

3. UMBRICHT SAID VIETNAMESE ARE HOPEFUL THAT NEW

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ADMINISTRATION WILL NOT NECESSARILY FEEL ITSELF BOUND BY PREVIOUS USG STATEMENTS EVEN THOUGH IT MAY STILL ADHERE TO SOME EARLIER VIEWS. ON THE VIETNAMESE SIDE, IN THIS CONTEXT, UMBRICHT CONSIDERS IT SIGNIFICANT THAT FOR THE FIRST TIME IN HIS SERIES OF CONTACTS WITH VIETNAMESE OFFICIALS, THE PHRASE "TO HEAL THE WOUNDS OF WAR" WAS NOT USED BY LUU, AND THAT HE ALSO DID NOT MENTION A SPECIFIC AMOUNT OF U.S. ASSISTANCE BEING SOUGHT BY VIET-NAM.

4. UMBRICHT SAID HE AND VIETNAMESE ARE BOTH AWARE OF CONGRESSIONAL PROBLEMS WITH RESPECT TO THE AID QUESTION BUT EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT SOME U.S. AID COULD BE PROVIDED SOON AT LEAST THROUGH EXISTING INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS. REVERTING TO THE POSSIBILITY OF WALDHEIM'S SEEKING A MANDATE FROM THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OR ECOSOC ON BASIS OF WHICH SYG COULD LAUNCH AN APPEAL (PARA 6 REFTEL), UMBRICHT SAID SYG IS STILL HOLDING BACK BUT WOULD FIND IT TREMENDOUSLY ENCOURAGING IF U.S. GAVE HIM THE SIGNAL TO GO AHEAD, SUCH SIGNAL BEING TAKEN AS INDICATIVE OF EVENTUAL U.S. READINESS TO MAKE POSITIVE RESPONSE EVEN IF USG NOT ALE TO DO SO IMMEDIATELY. HE NOTED, HOWEVER, THAT FROM A PRACTICAL STANDPOINT USING THE SECRETARY GENERAL AS A CHANNEL MAY NOT BE THE BEST SINCE SYG WOULD HAVE TO CREATE A NEW STRUCTURE FOR ADMINISTERING A LARGE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

5. UMBRICHT FELT THAT EVERYONE, INCLUDING THE CONFIDENTIAL

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CHINESE WOULD BE HAPPY TO SEE A LARGE-SCALE MULTILATERAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR VIET-NAM EXCEPT THE USSR, WHICH OBVIOUSLY WANTS TO RETAIN ITS PREDOMINANT INFLUENCE IN VIET-NAM. HE NOTED THAT SOVIETS REFUSED TO RECEIVE HIM IN MOSCOW ALTHOUGH HE HAS BEEN ABLE TO HAVE CONTACTS WITH SOVIET OFFICIALS ELSEWHERE IN EUROPE.

6. UMBRICHT DREW SPECIAL ATTENTION TO CURRENT LARGE FOOD DEFICIT IN VIET-NAM (ESTIMATED AT 800,000 TO 1.2 MILLION METRIC TONS) AND INDICATED THAT VIETNAMESE WOULD WELCOME U.S. FOOD ASSISTANCE. HE THOUGHT THAT A MULTILATERAL APPROACH ON THIS ASPECT WOULD BE PARTICULARLY APPROPRIATE.

7. CHARGE EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR BRINGING AND PROMISED TO CONVEY INFORMATION TO WASHINGTON, UMBRICHT NOTED THAT HE WOULD BE MEETING WITH VICE FOREIGN MINISTER HIEN IN PARIS LATER THIS MONTH AT LATTER'S REQUEST

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AND THAT HE WOULD VIEIT VIET-NAM IN AUGUST/SEPTEMBER.
HE WILL ALSO BE VISITING THE U.S. THIS SUMMER,
POSSIBLY AS EARLY AS NEXT MONTH.SORENSON

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